GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
CULTURE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1039
ANSWERED ON:23.10.2008
CONSTRUCTION OF CEMENT PORTICOES AT AJANTA CAVES
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Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has put to rest its project to construct cement porticoes at the second century BC Ajanta Caves− a UNESCO World Heritage site;

(b) if so, the reasons for shelving the portico plan and the details thereof;

(c) whether the construction of the porticoes was objected to by the experts and conservationists;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the time by which the construction of the proposed portico started and the latest position of the dug up portion?

Answer

MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SMT. AMBIKA SONI)

(a) to (e) A proposal to reconstruct two pillars of the portico of Cave No. 1 at Ajanta was under preparation in accordance with the recommendation made by Japan Bank of International Cooperation's Panel of Experts (PoE) in November 2005 that pillars of structural importance may be suitably reconstructed to provide adequate support.

Reservations were expressed about the proposal to construct a replacement porch in front of Cave No. 1 at Ajanta

The reconstruction of the portico has not been started. Some portion of concrete in front of Cave No. 1 was removed for locating pillar bases, which has now been covered.

The Panel of Experts has not met since 2005. A final decision is expected to be taken in the next POE meeting.